

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-2 and 5-7 are pending in the application. Claims 3-4 have been canceled.

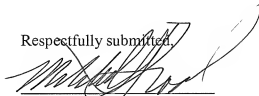
The Examiner's indication that claims 5-6 contain allowable subject matter is acknowledged and appreciated. Claim 5 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 4. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5-6 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-4 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2005/0119672 to Benchetrit ("Benchetrit") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,676,674 to Dudai ("Dudai"). This rejection is respectfully traversed as follows. Independent claim 1 recites a first end part of the ring closure system including a reinforcement structure. It is respectfully submitted that Benchetrit does not teach or suggest this feature. Reference number 11 of Benchetrit refers not to a reinforcement structure, but to grips for handling the band. *See* Benchetrit at ¶ 46. Dudai also fails to teach or suggest this feature. For at least this reason, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable over Benchetrit in view of Dudai.

It is believed that all objections and rejections in the application have been addressed and that the present application is in condition for allowance. A favorable reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is solicited. If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-2298 for any additional required fees.

Dated: March 9, 2009

Respectfully submitted,



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